

Remarks

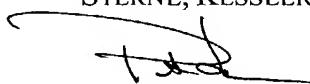
The specification has been amended to clarify the relationship of priority applications. As this application is a national stage of an international application whose filing date is prior to November 29, 2000, the amendment to the priority claim is timely. 37 C.F.R. § 1.78(a)(2)(ii)(C). These changes are believed to introduce no new matter, and their entry is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Preliminary Amendment is respectfully requested. Applicants believe the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

Respectfully submitted,

STERNE, KESSLER, GOLDSTEIN & FOX P.L.L.C.



Peter A. Jackman
Attorney for Applicants
Registration No. 45,986

Date: March 26, 2004

1100 New York Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005-3934
(202) 371-2600

245039.1